

ICHETUCKNEE ALLIANCE
Notes from MFL Conference Call
April 21, 2014

Present

John Jopling
Charles Maxwell
Lu Merritt
Terri Skiles
Cathy Street

Absent

Bob Knight

John Jopling convened the call shortly after 8 p.m. to discuss if and how the Alliance should proceed with a request for administrative hearing on the revised MFL Rule that is being proposed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Jopling summarized his recent telephone calls with Ann Shortelle of the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD), Attorney John Thomas, and Attorney David Guest of Earthjustice.

A lively discussion followed.

Merritt asked if a challenge to the MFL would prevent FDEP and SRWMD from performing their constitutionally mandated duties to protect the river; the feeling was that no, a challenge would not prevent this. The agencies would still be required to develop an MFL, although SRWMD admits there are problems with their current water model. Merritt pointed out that SRWMD had been offered a better model a few years ago but had declined to accept it.

Street indicated discomfort with waiting years for a new model to be developed and mentioned that "It will take a miracle to restore the river" with the proposed MFLs.

Maxwell asked about the time frame involved in an administrative hearing and mentioned the importance of giving a voice to average citizens as opposed to special interests.

Skiles asked about other groups making similar challenges and voiced concerns and reservations about the Alliance's being perceived as an obstructionist group that is "blowing against the wind."

Jopling reiterated that we are willing to work with everyone, but "the river has been given nothing" in the proposed MFL.

After the discussion, Jopling indicated he would entertain a motion to join the petition for an administrative hearing filed by Earthjustice for the Florida Wildlife Federation, to include a payment of \$500 to Earthjustice.

Cathy Street: So moved.
Lu Merritt: Second.

Votes on the motion:

Cathy Street	yes
Charles Maxwell	yes
Lu Merritt	yes
Terri Skiles	yes
John Jopling	yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lucinda Faulkner Merritt, Secretary